

COUNTRY DATA: GREECE

: Information from the CIA World Factbook

INTRODUCTION

Greece achieved independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829. During the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, it gradually added neighboring islands and territories, most with Greek-speaking populations. In World War II, Greece was first invaded by Italy (1940) and subsequently occupied by Germany (1941-44); fighting endured in a protracted civil war between supporters of the king and Communist rebels. Following the latter's defeat in 1949, Greece joined NATO in 1952. In 1967, a group of military officers seized power, establishing a military dictatorship that suspended many political liberties and forced the king to flee the country. In 1974, democratic elections and a referendum created a parliamentary republic and abolished the monarchy. In 1981, Greece joined the EC (now the EU); it became the 12th member of the European Economic and Monetary Union in 2001. In 2010, the prospect of a Greek default on its euro-denominated debt created severe strains within the EMU and raised the question of whether a member country might voluntarily leave the common currency or be removed.

GEOGRAPHY

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Location | Southern Europe, bordering the Aegean Sea, Ionian Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea, between Albania and Turkey |
| Area | 131,957 sq km |
| Climate | temperate; mild, wet winters; hot, dry summers |
| Natural Resources | lignite, petroleum, iron ore, bauxite, lead, zinc, nickel, magnesite, marble, salt, hydropower potential |
| Total Renewable Water Resources | 72 cu km (2005) |
| Freshwater Withdrawal | total: 8.7 cu km/yr (16%/3%/81%) per capita: 782 cu m/yr (1997) |
| Natural Hazards | severe earthquakes volcanism: Santorini (elev. 367 m, 1,204 ft) has been deemed a "Decade Volcano" by the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior, worthy of study due to its explosive history and close proximity to human populations; although there have been very few eruptions in recent centuries, Methana and Nisyros in the Aegean are classified as historically active |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Environmental Issues | air pollution; water pollution |
| PEOPLE | |
| Population | 10,749,943 (July 2010 est.) |
| Ethnic Groups | population: Greek 93%, other (foreign citizens) 7% (2001 census) <i>note:</i> percents represent citizenship, since Greece does not collect data on ethnicity |
| Religions | Greek Orthodox 98%, Muslim 1.3%, other 0.7% |
| Languages | Greek 99% (official), other 1% (includes English and French) |
| Literacy Rate | 96% |
| Major Infectious Diseases | HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 11,000 (2007 est.) |
| GOVERNMENT | |
| Type | parliamentary republic |
| Independence | 1829 (from the Ottoman Empire) |
| Constitution | 11 June 1975; amended March 1986 and April 2001 |
| Legal System | based on codified Roman law; judiciary divided into civil, criminal, and administrative courts; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations |
| ECONOMY | |
| Agricultural Products | wheat, corn, barley, sugar beets, olives, tomatoes, wine, tobacco, potatoes; beef, dairy products |
| Industries | tourism, food and tobacco processing, textiles, chemicals, metal products; mining, petroleum |
| Import commodities | Germany 13.73%, Italy 12.71%, China 7.08%, France 6.1%, Netherlands 6.02%, South Korea 5.68%, Belgium 4.34%, Spain 4.08% (2009) |
| Import Partners | Germany 13.73%, Italy 12.71%, China 7.08%, France 6.1%, Netherlands 6.02%, South Korea 5.68%, Belgium 4.34%, Spain 4.08% (2009) |
| Export Commodities | Food and beverages, manufactured goods, petroleum products, chemicals, textiles |
| Export Partners | Germany 11.11%, Italy 11.05%, Cyprus 7.28%, Bulgaria 6.74%, US 4.95%, UK 4.4%, Turkey 4.23% (2009) |
| Per Capita GDP | \$31,000 (2009 est.) |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Population below poverty line | 20% (2009 est.) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|

*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.